

# Dungeness National Nature Reserve

## The RSPB

The RSPB, Europe's largest wildlife charity has a long history on Dungeness. Since the early twentieth century it has employed watchers to look after the breeding seabirds on the shingle. The RSPB manages large areas of gravel pits, reed beds and shingle habitats which have colonies of seabirds, breeding ducks and wintering wildfowl.



To discover more and explore the Dungeness RSPB reserve, why not visit the reserve with its new Visitor and Education Centre and shop. You can also explore a number of nature trails and hides around the gravel pits of Dungeness with large car parks and toilets also available. Contact the RSPB on 01797 320588. [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## The Water Tower

A distinctive landmark across the shingle landscape is the white capped water tower which is at the back of a gravel pit on the road between Lydd and Dungeness. This impressive tower was built in 1905. The drinking water for most of the Romney Marsh comes from a large aquifer under the shingle and is of excellent quality.



## Lydd Ranges

The vast Lydd Ranges have been owned by the Ministry of Defence since 1881, with the Royal Irish Rifles forming the first garrison there. The first permanent buildings were erected in 1906 in what are today very busy firing ranges stretching from Camber to near the power stations.

Lydd MOD Firing Ranges (SSSI)

## Power Stations

There are two nuclear power stations at Dungeness, the oldest and nearest to the lighthouse was built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with decommissioning starting in early 2007. The second power station which started generating electricity in 1983 continues to operate. Websites [www.britishnucleargroup.com](http://www.britishnucleargroup.com) (Dungeness A) and [www.british-energy.com](http://www.british-energy.com) (Dungeness B).



## Railway

The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Light Railway terminates at Dungeness and is a popular tourist attraction for the region. The narrow gauge railway was built in 1927 from Hythe to New Romney and the extension to Dungeness followed a year later. Captain John Howey, a railway enthusiast, built the RHDR after making his fortune from real estate in the centre of Melbourne, Australia. Website [www.rhdr.org.uk](http://www.rhdr.org.uk)



## Listening Ears

At the back of two gravel pits at Lade on an island are the three concrete mirrors, or listening ears, built in the 1920s and 1930s to detect enemy aircraft as they approached Britain. This is the only site in Britain where all three designs are situated in one place. This early warning system had a range of 20 miles and became obsolete by the outbreak of the Second World War due to the arrival of radar, however they have survived. They can be seen on free, non booking, guided walks in the summer. Website: [www.rmcp.co.uk](http://www.rmcp.co.uk)



## Lighthouses

There have been five lighthouses built at Dungeness over the centuries. Today, the Old Lighthouse, which was built in 1904, still stands adjacent to the Round House which once had a light on the top itself. The New Lighthouse (the stripy one) was built in 1961 to aid shipping further out on the Point. The New Lighthouse remains operational, while the Old Lighthouse is a tourist attraction.

[www.dungenesslighthouse.com](http://www.dungenesslighthouse.com)

## Lifeboats

The big white lifeboat station was built in the late 1970s. The old lifeboat station was built in 1921 and is situated near to the fishing boats about half a kilometre nearer to the Point.

[www.dungeness-lifeboat.org.uk](http://www.dungeness-lifeboat.org.uk)





**Please respect the privacy of the residents and keep to the waymarked paths**

Please don't leave your litter - take it home with you. control and clean up after them.



**Dogs**

Dogs are allowed on Dungeness NNR with the exception of the RSPB reserve. Please consider the other users of the area, keep your dogs under control and clean up after them.

**Rubbish**

Please take your rubbish home or put it in the rubbish bins provided across the NNR. The NNR reserve stretches north up the coast from the Point and encompasses Lydd-on-Sea, Lade and parts of Greatstone. As well as the RSPB reserve and the shingle adjacent to the Dengemarsh Road next to the Lydd Firing Ranges.



Parking areas are clearly marked for NNR visitors.

Four wheel drive vehicles, motorbikes and quad bikes are not permitted to drive on Dungeness NNR. There is a Special Nature Conservation Order which allows quicker prosecutions and hefty fines to individuals who persist in damaging the NNR. Please park in the designated laybys and car parks.

**Four wheel drive vehicles and motorbikes**

**Dungeness**

Dungeness is a unique landscape with wooden houses, power stations, a miniature railway line, lighthouses and expansive gravel pits. The communities of plants and animals living at Dungeness are distinctive, precious and exceptionally fragile. The diverse wildlife, complex land form and sheer size make Dungeness one of the best examples of a shingle beach in the world.



**A National Nature Reserve**

Dungeness has been designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area for Conservation (SAC). It is home to many rare and endangered insects, plants and wildlife. The National Nature Reserve stretches across Dungeness to encompass the vast RSPB reserve and is intended to help protect the landscape and its wildlife.

**Gravel extraction across Dungeness**

Dungeness has attracted the gravel extraction industry for years. You will see the legacy of gravel extraction in the number of old gravel pits across the landscape. Breeding seabirds and wintering wildfowl, like the Shoveler Duck, the rare Great Crested Newt and Medicinal Leech now benefit from such wetland sites.

**A National Nature Reserve at the bottom of your garden**

It is not usual to have a National Nature Reserve at the bottom of the garden or opposite your house, but many residents of Dungeness do. Help look after the NNR by not having fires or dumping rubbish on the land. Improving the quality of life and the landscape is the goal for all of us - for generations to come.



Romney Marsh Countryside Project  
Romney Marsh Day Centre,  
Rolfe Lane, New Romney,  
Kent TN28 8JR  
Tel: 01797 367934  
Email mail@rmcp.co.uk Website www.rmcp.co.uk



Designed by Nick Evans Communications, (tel 01227 275157).  
Cover and map artwork by John Cann.

**Dungeness National Nature Reserve**

**Dungeness, Lydd-on-Sea, Lade, Greatstone-on-Sea**

**Wildlife at Dungeness**

Dungeness has many distinctive plants which favour the pebble landscape close to the sea. Look out for the plants which are at their best in late June.

These include Sea Kale, Sea Pea, Yellow Horned Poppy, Viper's Bugloss, Nottingham Catchfly and Wild Carrot.



Dungeness does not have a wealth of trees in this hostile landscape. Blackthorn or sloe trees grow in a prostrate form as does the yellow flowered broom bushes which hug the shingle landscape. The blackthorns in particular can be smothered in lichens due to the clean air.

The gravel pits are home to the protected Great Crested Newt and are the best area in Britain for the medicinal leech, the largest species of leech found in the UK. Birds are a speciality of Dungeness, the Common Tern can be seen in the summer months where it breeds on the islands on the gravel pits and in the winter some of the largest populations of Smew can be seen.

Dungeness has a rich array of insects, notably its moth species. One speciality is the Sussex Emerald Moth which is a night flying green moth which appears in July. The caterpillar feeds on Wild Carrot. Dungeness is the only place in Britain where this moth is found.



Male Great Crested Newt © Brian Banks



Medicinal Leech



Common Tern



Male Smew © RSPB Images